Military cooperation between China and Pakistan

427. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the continuous rise of military co-operation between China and Pakistan;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) the steps Government have taken or propose to take to ensure India's security ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) Government are aware of continuing defence co-operation between China and Pakistan.

(b) Government have, in their discussions with the Chinese Government, emphasised that the supply of sophisticated arms and defence technology to Pakistan, beyond its legitimate requirements of defence, poses a threat to India's security and is not conducive to the maintenance of peace and stability in South Asia. Government have additionally stressed the need for avoidance of actions that do not build mutual confidence and understanding between India and China.

(c) Government keep under constant review all developments having a bearing on India's security and take appropriate measures to safeguard the national interest.

India's stand on Signing N.P.T.

428. SHRI KAPIL VERMA:

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

KUMARI SAYEEDA KHATUN:

SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any change in India's stand on signing the N.P.T. in wake of China's decision to sign it; if not, the reasons therefor; and

(b) whether Government have seen the critical comments in Soviet Press about India's reluctance to sign the N.P.T. or to open its nuclear installations to International inspection; if so, its reactions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) China's decision, in principle, to sign the NPT does not remove the discriminatory provision of that Treaty. Therefore, our objections to the Treaty remain unchanged.

(b) Government are aware of the criticism of India's position on the N.P.T. including by a section of the Soviet Press. Even without being a party to the N.P.T. India has scrupulously adhered to a non-proliferation policy and has never helped any country in the development of nuclear weapons. The Government will continue to abide by such a policy.

Main Battle Tank built by Pakistan

429. SHRI KAPIL VERMA:

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

KUMARI SAYEEDA KHATUN:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have seen reports o fPakistani Army Chief Aslam Beg's claim that Pakistan had conceived, designed and produced its main battle tank "Al Khalid" within three years; if so, what is the Government's information about it; and

(b) what is Government's information about role of China in this matter in context of Pak Press's assertion that the Army was playing a hoax and that the tank was not indigenous but made in China?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) and (b) Government have seen Pakistani media reports suggesting that the prototype of the main battle tank displayed in July this year

was actually made in China. Government are also aware of Pakistan's continuing effort to produce its main battle tank in co-operation with China.

Freedom of Information

430. SHRI KAPIL VERMA:

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

KUMARI SAYEEDA KHATUN:

SHRI BEKAL UTSAHI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to amend the law to provide for the right of Freedom of Information to citizens;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether an inter-ministerial Committee was set up to examine the Official Secrets Act with a view to making Government functioning more transparent; if so, the recommendations made and Government's reactions thereto; and

(d) whether any amendment are contemplated in the Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB): (a) to (d) The Inter-Ministerial Task Force which was set up to go into the entire question regarding Right to Information has since submitted its Report.

Its recommendations reflect on the one hand, the need for a more purposeful information dissemination system and on the other a close and comprehensive look on issues relating to security clarification and privacy.

In view of the importance and complexity of the subject, formulation of definite views on the issues involved in the matter would necessarily take time.

Non-Working of Telephones in Calcutta

431. PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 684 given in the Rajya Sabha on 21-1-1991 and state:

(a) whether apart from the six telephones, there are still large number of telephones not in the working order despite complaints;

(b) whether the rate of complaints has been increasing day by day and no prompt action is taken to put back the telephones into proper service within a reasonable period of time;

(c) what were the telephone numbers in the area for which complaints were lodged by the MPs and that were not found feasible for setting right the telephanes; and

(a) what further action proposed to be taken to improve the services and on the written complaints received from the subscribers in the areas in July and August 1991;

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) No, Sir. At present only five lines are faulty in the Mahesh Dutt Lane.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) All telephones in Mahesh Dutt Lane about which complaints were received from MPs have been attended to.

(d) Pending cases are reviewed in weekly meeting by GM & CGM to ensure that long pending faults are reduced. However, the following steps are taken to improve the service in general.

(i) Laying the cables in ducts.

(ii) Replacement of old strowger Exchange by Electronic Exchanges.

(iii) Replacement of old Telephone Instruments.